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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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April 16, 1981

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

There is no better way to demonstrate the concern or the compassion of the American people for the suffering of others than high level diplomatic missions or personal visits to stricken areas of the world.

At the present time, there is a grave political, economic, and potentially serious military crisis developing in Southwestern Asia. Ever since the massive Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, Pakistan has had to absorb a massive influx of men, women, and children desperate to escape the intolerable conditions of their native land of Afghanistan. The resistance in Afghanistan, though it has been poorly armed, has managed to put up a vigorous fight, harassing Soviet regular forces and requiring the Soviet high command to employ the most sophisticated military equipment.

From independent sources, we have learned that Soviets have not only employed sophisticated helicopter gunships, but also napalm, anti-vegetation chemicals, white phosphorous bombs, nerve gas and poison for destroying water supplies or water wells. Frustrated at their inability to fight and destroy the elusive and spirited Afghan resistance, the Soviet high command has apparently adopted what amounts to a "scorched earth" policy, the deliberate bombing of villages and attacks on civilians, in an effort to break the morale of the Afghan resistance and undermine its base of political and military support. As a result, the flow of refugees out of the country has accelerated. Iran has been providing the bare essentials for up to 700,000 Afghan refugees. The Pakistan refugee population has grown to at least 1.7 million, and the figure, as of this date, may be higher.

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Obviously, this influx of refugees into Pakistan throws great new difficulties on the government of Pakistan. The cost of absorbing such a large number of new residents, most of them unable to support themselves in a proper fashion, are considerably high and introduce new economic and social stresses into a country already troubled with internal political problems.

We fear that the Soviets will launch a massive offensive this Spring in order to crush the Afghan resistance. If that offensive should be undertaken in the fashion we expect, we can expect to see a further increase in the number of refugees flowing into an already beleaguered Pakistan, a virtual tidal wave of humanity desperate to escape the bloody imposition of the Soviet rule. Such a development will aggravate existing instabilities in Pakistan and the Southwest Asian region; such instability will, of course, further serve Soviet geopolitical interests.

We are aware of the many responsibilities that you face in your present position. But, we ask you to please consider sending a high level mission to the refugee camps in Pakistan. Such a visit would highlight the attention of the United States on the tragedy that is taking place in Afghanistan and would once again focus the attention of the entire free world on the brutality of the illegal Soviet invasion and the harsh occupation of Afghanistan. Moreover, such an American delegation would highlight America's continuing interest in the need to secure our vital interests in Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf region, currently the most dangerous arena of competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress

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